

## Visual Impact Assessment References

REFERENCE 3 – Sensitivity Level Analysis

Source: BLM; VRM Manual H-8410-1 – Visual Resource Inventory; Rel. 8-28; 1/17/86

### Definition of Sensitivity Level Key Factors

**User – Resident** - The local users/residents include both full-time and seasonal property owners and renters within the study area. Their level of sensitivity to visual change is variable based upon their history within the region and potential emotional attachment to the visual landscape that they routinely engage. The visual landscape that this user group will be most familiar with includes those that they routinely pass through while driving, shopping, working, and recreating, as well as from more stationary activities that take place in their neighborhood, property, and from within their homes.

**User – Commuter** - Commuters within the study area will tend to be concentrated along the major roadways and highways within the visual study area. These users tend to react less to visual changes within the transportation corridor since the majority of their view is forward focused, at a high speed with the driver concentrating on traffic activity and patterns. However, commuters may have visual markers within the corridor they travel, but the duration in which they engage those views are often fleeting, except for the passenger, which would have more time to take in the visual landscape.

**User – Recreational** - Recreational users is a broad category including local residents, regional users, and tourists that visit the visual study area in order to participate in both passive and active recreational resources such as parks, nature preserves, lakes and ponds, historic sites, camps, sports, hunting and fishing activities, as well as summer and winter sports such as swimming, sailing, water skiing, boating, snowmobiling, downhill and cross country skiing, etc. These users can be sensitive to visual change depending on the type of recreational use they are participating in.

**Adjacent Land Use** – The interrelationship with land uses in adjacent lands can affect the visual sensitivity of an area. For example, an area within the viewshed of a residential area may be very sensitive, whereas an area surrounded by commercially developed lands may not be visually sensitive. The maintenance of visual quality from within the study area can be important to the adjacent conservation, recreation and residential land users.

**Special Areas** – Management objectives for special areas such as Federal, State and Local sensitive resources frequently require special consideration for the protection of the visual values/ quality. This does not necessarily mean that these areas are scenic, but rather that one of the management objectives may be to preserve the natural landscape setting. The management objectives for these areas may be used as a basis for assigning sensitivity levels.

### Sensitivity Level Analysis

Key Factors	Rating Criteria and Score		
User - Resident	Maintenance of visual quality is:		
	A major concern for most residential users. <b>Score 5</b>	A moderate concern for most residential users. <b>Score 3</b>	A low concern for most residential users. <b>Score 1</b>
User - Commuter	Maintenance of visual quality is:		
	A major concern for most commuters travelling through the region. <b>Score 5</b>	A moderate concern for most commuters travelling through the region. <b>Score 3</b>	A low concern for most commuters travelling through the region. <b>Score 1</b>
User - Recreational	Maintenance of visual quality is:		
	A major concern for most recreational users and sightseers. <b>Score 5</b>	A moderate concern for most recreational users and sightseers. <b>Score 3</b>	A low concern for most recreational users and sightseers. <b>Score 1</b>

Adjacent Land Use	Maintenance of visual quality to sustain adjacent land use objectives is:		
	Very important for conservation, recreational and residential users. <b>Score 5</b>	Moderately important for recreational, residential, and village business users. <b>Score 3</b>	Slightly Important for commercial, industrial, interstate and highway users. <b>Score 1</b>
Special Areas	Maintenance of visual quality to sustain Special Area management objectives is:		
	Very Important for a high number of documented Natural Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Scenic Areas, Scenic Roads or Trails, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Regional and Local designations. <b>Score 5</b>	Moderately Important for a limited number of documented or recognized National, Regional and Local designations. <b>Score 3</b>	Slightly Important for an extremely limited or unrecognized National, Regional and Local designations. <b>Score 1</b>

Note: Values for each rating criteria are maximum and minimum scores only. It is also possible to assign scores within these ranges.